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ABSTRACT

Indian languages seem to have emerged from a phase of total dependence on English for new input. Several Indian languages have now evolved vocabularies and structural nuances to handle several new registers and styles necessary for modern society. Some of the change has occurred through conscious language policy encouraging multilingualism and the standardization of multiple languages. Adaptation, the naturalization of material within a language system as contrasted with superficial borrowing or infusion, is also occurring in several Indian languages. It has come about through urbanization, industrialization, and education, in the forms of straight borrowing from English, hybrids or loan blends, loan translations, adaptive coining, paraphrasing, semantic reinterpretation of Sanskrit words, expanding the semantic range of native words, and total assimilation of the nonnative concept. It now seems possible that Indian languages will achieve total intertranslatability with languages such as English, German, French, and Russian. (MSE)

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Aspects of Modernization in Indian Languages

C. J. Daswani

short title: Modernizing Indian Languages

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Language Planning

Any consideration of the strategies for adaptation of a language belongs, probably, to the relatively recent field of language planning. Even a superficial survey of some of the available literature on language planning reveals a remarkable variety of opinion on what forms the subject matter of language planning. Indeed, one encounters conflicting viewpoints and contradictions in the basic assumptions underlying the various attempts at formulation of a theoretical framework for the study of language planning goals and processes. There is also a great deal of ambiguity and overlap in the terminology employed by the various scholars. Terms such as language standardization (Ray 1963), language development (Ferguson 1968), language modernization (Krishnamurti and Mukherjee 1984), and language planning (Haugen 1966, 1971; Rubin and Jernudd 1971; Southworth and Daswani 1974; and many others) are used almost interchangeably. For Ferguson (1968) modernization is only one of the three components of language development; the other two being graphization and standardization. Haugen (1971) uses language planning and language standardization "in roughly identical meanings."

There is also no consensus on the definition and scope of language planning. In 1959, Haugen defined language planning as "the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community... Planning implies an attempt to

guide the development of a language in a direction desired by the planners" (Haugen 1968: 673f.). In 1966, Haugen defined language planning thus: "LP (language planning) is called for wherever there are language problems... The heart of LP is rather what I referred to as the 'exercise of judgment in the form of choices among available linguistic forms.' Even more concisely, I think we can define LP as **the evaluation of linguistic change**" (Haugen 1966a, 52). Elsewhere in his (1966a) paper, Haugen suggests that the problems that give rise to language planning may be considered special cases of the problems of non-communication. According to Rubin and Jernudd (1971, xvi) "language planning is **deliberate** language change, that is, changes in the systems of language code or speaking or both that are planned by organizations that are established for such purposes or given a mandate to fulfill such purposes." Rubin (1971, 218) states: "Language planning focusses upon the solutions to language problems through decisions about alternative goals, means, and outcomes to solve these problems."

While the foregoing definitions of language planning are externally oriented in the sense of there being an external agency that plans a language, the notion 'language development' as used by Ferguson (1968) focusses on the process of development within a language. Ferguson is aware that structurally no language (or dialect) can be legitimately called "backward" or "primitive." He therefore sets up "three dimensions relevant for

measuring language development: graphization - reduction to writing; standardization - the development of a norm which overrides regional and social dialects; and, for want of a better term, modernization - the development of intertranslatability with other languages in a range of topics and forms of discourse characteristic of industrialized, secularized, structurally differentiated 'modern' societies" (Ferguson 1971: 221). Ferguson's formulation is both more specific and value-loaded. According to this formulation languages can be at various stages--at least three--of development. By implication a language has to pass through the stages of graphization and standardization before it can become intertranslatable with other languages and meet the communicative needs of modern society. This formulation also implies that only industrialized, secularized, and structurally differentiated societies are "modern." There is a danger of circularity here.

Ferguson equates his formulation with several other approaches, particularly that of Haugen (1966b) which sets up a four-way matrix for language development:

(a) selection of norm;

(b) codification of form;

(c) elaboration of function;

(d) acceptance by the community.

Ferguson equates Haugen's elaboration of function with his own modernization feature, and the other three points in Haugen's

model with aspects of standardization. Presumably both Ferguson (1968) and Haugen (1966b) are still dealing with external or extra-linguistic factors in language development as distinct from natural linguistic change. If that assumption can be made, then, while Haugen is talking of development of a dialect into a standard language through elaborated communicative functions, Ferguson is essentially concerned with the development in an underdeveloped country which faces the problem of national multilingualism. In fact, the major slant in language planning theory seems to be that "a country that is linguistically highly heterogeneous is always underdeveloped" (Pool 1972).

The view that economic development and monolingualism go together is sought to be forwarded on the basis of what has happened in Europe and the Western hemisphere in the wake of industrialization. The emergence of the standard languages in Europe is seen at least as a necessary (if not also sufficient) condition for the economic development in these countries.

While the Western viewpoint of language planning is generally accepted, linguists in the developing countries are now raising questions about the validity of this viewpoint in a stable grass-roots multilingual society. The issue that is being raised is whether a political and economic model can be found to sustain multilingualism without sacrificing national development (cf. Pattanayak 1981).

Language Modernization

Let us return to Ferguson's concept of modernization. The process of modernization is seen to have "two aspects: (a) the expansion of the lexicon of the language by new words and expressions and, (b) the development of new styles and forms of discourse. Ferguson states that the second aspect has been less studied than the first. He is clear that lexical expansion, in order to be effective, must not be too fast. Lexical expansion can be effected both from within the language as well as by borrowing from other languages.

Strictly speaking, when reduced to these two aspects, modernization in the development of a language need not be a modern phenomenon. Surely, all languages go through a process of modernization at various periods in their history. In addition to the natural growth of the lexicon through semantic change, languages need to consciously add to their vocabularies in order to cope with new concepts and objects which result from accelerated activity in a language community both at the real-world (instrumental) level and at the philosophical (expressive) level. As Ferguson points out, the English language went through a process of modernization in the fifteenth century. Similarly, there is historical evidence to show that most Indian languages, particularly the languages of the Indo-Aryan family, have borrowed words from Sanskrit at various stages in their development (Emeneau 1956; Pandit 1972). It is important to

emphasize that lexical expansion does not necessarily take place in areas such as science and technology alone. Languages have depended on their neighbors or other contact languages for borrowing words in the domains of culture and social organization. As Sapir (1921) points out languages like the Chinese, Sanskrit, Arabic, Greek and Latin have been outstanding carriers of culture.

In one sense, therefore, Ferguson's definition of the feature of modernization is fairly general although it is value-loaded in that it projects as models the modern industrialized Western nation states. Alisjahbana (1967) rejects the Western approach to modernization as value-loaded and dominating. Kelkar (1984) makes a distinction between technical use and poetic use which may be seen as two extremes in specialized language use both making special demands on the structural and contextual resources of a language.

Vernacular and Language

Haugen (1966b) equates a dialect with a vernacular. Language for him is superordinate, and dialect subordinate; language is developed, and dialect undeveloped (or underdeveloped). A dialect is, in a sense, an underdeveloped language. Having set up this equation Haugen goes on to assert that "all the great languages of today were once undeveloped." He also suggests that the term vernacular may be used for an undeveloped language.

According to Haugen's definition most Indian languages would be considered vernaculars. Perhaps Sanskrit alone, of all the Indian languages recognized by the Indian constitution, would qualify as a language that once fulfilled the four aspects of language development discussed above; but now even Sanskrit, in its present function, would not be considered a developed language in terms of Haugen's (1966b) matrix.

The UNESCO monograph entitled The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education (1953) defines 'vernacular language' as "a language which is the mother tongue of a group which is socially or politically dominated by another group speaking a different language. We do not consider the language of a minority in one country as a vernacular if it is an official language in another country."

If the UNESCO definition of 'vernacular language' were to be applied to the Indian languages, not one of them would qualify. No language group in India can be said to be under the social or political domination of another language group. One might, perhaps, argue that since Hindi is the stated official language of the Indian Union, all other regional languages may be termed 'vernaculars.' But all the major regional languages are "official" languages at the regional level, which would disqualify them as vernaculars. Of course, since there is no strictly monolingual region in India, speakers of other regional languages

resident in a particular state would have been termed as speakers of vernaculars except for the rider in the UNESCO definition which does not consider a minority language a vernacular if it is an official language elsewhere.

Of course, according to this definition Sanskrit might qualify for the status of vernacular, since it is not the official language of any Indian state or another country. Also scores of "mother tongues" spoken by large numbers of people might qualify for the status of vernacular under the UNESCO dispensation. But within the Haugen definition even these mother tongues would be mere dialects (regional or social varieties) of languages irrespective of development status.

The Indian Situation

Linguistic diversity in India is both phenomenal and astounding. According to the 1961 census about 520 million people in India claimed to be speakers of 1652 mother tongues. And yet the Indian constitution recognizes only fourteen major languages in addition to the official languages, Hindi and English. Every Indian adult is a bi- or multi-lingual speaker. Even an illiterate rural Indian is able to manipulate several dialects of languages. An educated urbanized Indian controls several languages and uses two or more languages in his day-to-day communicative existence.

Every school going Indian formally learns three languages: (i) his mother tongue or regional language, (ii) Hindi, and (iii) English. Where Hindi is the mother tongue or the regional language, he learns another Indian language in addition to English. A parent has the choice of sending his child to a school that imparts instruction in the mother tongue or English (or in Hindi in some non-Hindi speaking areas). At the college and university levels, technical and science subjects are invariably taught through the medium of English. Other subjects are taught through the regional language and English.

In the professions and trade there is an implicit gradation: the regional language being preferred at the local level, and English or Hindi being used in the larger urban centers and in more structured and formal contexts. Over the last three decades, however, the regional languages have tended to spread to contexts once controlled through English.

In the judiciary, for instance, the regional language is used in the local law courts and English in the High Courts and the Supreme Court of India. The language of governance can be the regional language, Hindi or English. The Indian government communicates with the states in English and Hindi and the state governments communicate with the government of India likewise in English or Hindi. At the state level, the government uses the regional language.

It can perhaps be said with some justification that although there is a stated language policy, language use all over the country follows the simple rule of efficiency. That is not to say that there are no problems or conflicts. It is well-known that the Indian language situation is often held up as an example of inefficient and unsuccessful language planning. Admittedly, the Indian situation outlined here oversimplifies the reality. There are innumerable complications that have socio-politico- economic implications and repercussions. For instance, the availability of choice of the language of instruction has resulted in a continued prestige status for English. Perception of different languages and dialects as superior or inferior has helped maintain a language hierarchy characteristic of a traditionally multilingual society.

The language situation in India is dynamic, often volatile. Yet, there are indicators that the nation is capable of working towards a multilingual solution to the problem of language choice at various levels of communication.

Language Modernization in India

The constitution of India in article 351 (Part xvii, chapter iv) provides that:

> "It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other

> languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages."

The foregoing statement formulated by the makers of the Indian constitution in 1949 could very easily become a part of a treatise on language planning or language modernization. This was the official blue-print to be followed for the development of the official language of India.

Soon after the adoption of the constitution in 1950 the government of India took steps to evolve technical terminology in Hindi. The task was assigned to the Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology set up for this purpose. Concurrently with the evolution of terminology the task of translating technical and scientific textbooks and reference books into Hindi, as also the task of producing dictionaries and encyclopedias in Hindi were taken up by various groups of experts. The National Council of Educational Research and Teaching was established to produce curricula and textbooks to replace the older texts produced in English, often outside India.

What was attempted to be done for Hindi by way of modernization and standardization by the Union government, the state governments replicated for the modernization and standardization of the regional languages, particularly those listed in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution as "major" languages of India. The government efforts were reinforced by

individual efforts of scholars, academicians and voluntary social service and educational institutions both at national and state levels.

National institutes were established to research in the various languages and to evolve methodologies for modernization and standardization of these languages. Starting of national and regional radio broadcasts in all the languages; creation of literary academies; encouraging film and drama in the various languages; institutions of prizes and rewards in all the languages, formed some of the planned activities initiated by the Union and State governments to bring about modernization of Indian languages.

Nationalism, Language, Identity and Language Modernization in India

Throughout its political and social history, India has been a bi- or multilingual entity. No one standardized or unified language has held sway over all the communicative domains and needs of the multilingual people in India. There have always existed a number of languages that have lived and developed together. Indeed, it is not difficult to believe that there must always have been language tensions and language clashes in India. In its multilingual ethos, before 1947, India had always had a foreign language as the language of political authority and national administration. Sanskrit, Persian and English have each

successively held sway over the political and administrative fortunes of the people.

Almost all the Indian languages (Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic) have borrowed freely from the dominant languages either directly or through neighboring languages. Nor has the borrowing of vocabulary (and structures) been restricted to words from foreign languages. Inter-regional borrowing of vocabulary among various languages has been attested (Emeneau 1964).

However, in addition to acceptance of a superposed language of the political rulers of conquerors, the people have always retained strong emotional links with the local or regional languages. While there has been intimate borrowing across languages and language families, national identity or political allegiance has not led to the acceptance of a single language as the sole vehicle of communication of all people.

It might be profitable to study the phenomena of modernization and multilingualism as dynamic aspects of Indian nationalism, although this may militate against the theoretical assumptions of scholars who study nationalism and language development. The question of the relationship between language diversity and economic underdevelopment is a serious question and cannot be ignored. But this question too must be re-examined in

the context of the realities in India where every ethnic and cultural group wants its own identity and at the same time wants the umbrella, that is, both the comfort of unity and the pleasure of identity. No one has any answers at present, but the questions are of great significance for a clear understanding of the relationship between nationalism and language development on one hand, and between nationalism and multilingualism on the other.

Dynamics of Language Modernization in India

Urbanization, industrialization and education are major factors in the processes of modernization of Indian languages. While education has brought formal language within the reach of many people, industrialization and urbanization have helped to liberate the people from traditional roles within a hierarchical social structure requiring predetermined communicative behavior patterns. Formal language is now common property. More and more people are reading in their languages and as the demand for information increases, the regional languages have to evolve strategies for acquiring, processing and transmitting information. The two areas where there has been tremendous and spontaneous language modernization in India are (i) the news media, particularly the newspapers, and (ii) the school textbooks.

In a recent publication (krishnamurti and Mukherjee 1984) of papers presented at a national seminar on Modernization of Indian

Languages in News Media held in the Osmania University in 1978, thirteen papers on different aspects of modernization of news media in six languages attest to the development of the registers and styles of newspaper and other media in Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil and Telugu.

In an overview article, Krishnamurti (1984) provides a very cogent account of the processes of lexical innovation in Indian languages, particularly in the South Indian (Dravidian) languages. He draws on several other papers in the volume and demonstrates that almost all the languages represented in the volume employ common mechanisms of modernization. Krishnamurti claims that despite their individual development independently of each other, these languages have a common socio-political history, and share a common reliance on Sanskrit as a source of lexical expansion. Additionally, the mechanisms employed by these languages fall within the known universal patterns followed by languages in a contact situation. It is found that these languages rely heavily on English, and Sanskrit and Persian for lexical expansion in addition to exploiting internal resources.

Krishnamurti attests eight mechanisms employed by these languages:

1. **Straight borrowing from English** with phonetic and orthographic adjustments. This is a common strategy, though not a favored one. (Examples: bank, hotel, police, bonus, license.)

2. Hybrids or loan blends with English, Sanskrit or Perso-Arabic constituents compounded with native words or with each other.

For instance, 'World Bank:'

Telugu: prapancha byaanku
(Sanskrit + English)

Kannada: wiswa byaanku
(Sanskrit + English)

Tamil: ulaka vanki
(Tamil + English)

3. Loan translations or calquing. For instance:

'black market'

Telugu: nella bajaaru

Kannada: KaaLa sante

Oriya: KaaLa bajaara

'black money'

Telegu: nalla dhanam

Tamil: karuppu paaNam

Kannada: kappu haaNa

Oriya: KaaLa dhana

Bengali: Kaalo Taka

Marathi: kaalaa paisaa

4. Adaptive coining, i. e., adapting the meaning of an existing native meaning of an existing native or non-native word indicating a meaning not originally indicated by these words. In this class of lexical innovation different Indian languages have developed different meanings for the same non-native words. For instance,

'state' 'republic' 'nation' 'caste'

Telugu:	raaStram	raajyaangam'	jaati	-
Hindi:	raajya	raaStra	-	jaati

5. **Paraphrasing** where, in the absence of an equivalent, a phrase is used to replace the borrowed lexical item.

6. **Semantic reinterpretation** of Sanskrit words, for instance, Telugu 'radio:' aakaaSwaaNi
lit: 'sky-voice'

7. **Expanding the semantic range** of native words

8. **Total assimilation** of the non-native concept into the native vocabulary, for instance,

	Telugu
'smuggled goods'	donga saruku
'smuggling, black market'	donga wyaapaaram
'illicit liquor'	donga saaraayi
'black money'	donga sommu
'illegal license'	donga laysensu

What is significant to note is that several of the authors of the above book assert that while some years ago the vernacular newspapers tended to translate their news copy from the English original, now they write the news originally in the vernaculars. In several languages newspapers have created and popularized a colloquial style of writing. Many lexical items first introduced by newspapers have become part of the native lexicon.

In the field of textbook writing, the present writer has personal experience that until a few years ago regional language textbooks were translated from English. Currently many textbooks are first written in the regional language and subsequently translated into English for use in English-medium schools. This is particularly true of textbooks in social sciences where the

textbook writer has to have knowledge of local social structures and terminology.

In the area of script reform there has been less success (Daswani 1976). An attempt was made to introduce a uniform Devanagari-based script for all Indian languages. The major reason why the single script was not accepted by all the other languages is perhaps the long written traditions in several of the non-Hindi languages, each with a script tradition of its own. Arguments in favor of Romanization of Indian languages (Ray 1963; Daswani 1975) have also not been accepted. It is likely that with the advent of computer technology the question of a common script will become more real and urgent.

Conclusion

Indian languages seem to have come out of the phase of total dependence on English for receiving new information. After having passed through the phase of literal translation, several Indian languages have now evolved vocabularies and structural nuances to handle several new registers and styles necessary for receiving, processing and transmitting information essential for the forming and maintenance of modern societies.

Language adaptation is a process that can be continuous or abrupt, thus there are languages that seem to adapt continuously and others that adapt at particular points of time in their

development. Moreover, as regards modernization, languages differ in yet another respect. There are languages that adapt unabashedly without really feeling conscious of their borrowing and bringing in new concepts and lexical items, and there are languages that are extremely reluctant in borrowing or adapting, hanging on to what is known rather than calling for something from the outside.Further, there is natural adaptation, and there is artificial or induced adaptation. Artificial adaptation, of course, can be managed or legislated or monitored, but natural adaptation is normally not managed or legislated or monitored. Both aspects of adaptation interact. While there may be a tendency either to remain within one's resources or to rely on external agencies and languages, one cannot compel a language to adapt in ways different from its own genius. Adaptation means taking in foreign or new material and adjusting it within one's own system. Thus adaptation is naturalization of material within the system of the language rather than superficial borrowing or infusion. The genius of the language is something that has to be understood, and adaptation processes that are at play are subject to these constraints. The mechanisms discussed above seem to indicate that such processes are fruitfully at work in several Indian languages at the present time. Therefore, it is possible that in the future Indian languages will achieve total inter-translatability with languages like English, German, French and Russian.

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